

To stinte noyse, and yewe him audience.

Thanne seyde he thus: Lo! lordes myne, I was
Troian, as it is knowen out of drede;
And if that yow remembre, I am Calkas,
That alderfirst yaf comfort to your nede,
And tolde wel how that ye sholden spede.
for dredelees, thorough yow, shal, in a stounde,
Ben Troye ybrend, and beten down to grounde.

And in what forme, or in what maner wyse
This town to shende, and al your lust to acheve,
Ye han er this wel herd it me devyse;
This knowe ye, my lordes, as I leve.
And for the Grekes weren me so leve,
I com myself in my propre persone,
To teche in this how yow was best to done;

Havange unto my tresour ne my rente
Right no resport, to respect of your ese.
Thus al my good I loste and to yow wente,
Wening in this you, lordes, for to plesse.
But al that los ne doth me no disese.
I vouchesauf, as wisly have I joye,
for you to lese al that I have in Troye,

Save of a doughter, that I lafte, alas!
Slepinge at hoom, whanne out of Troye I sterte.
O sterne, O cruel fader that I was!
How mighte I have in that so hard an herte?
Alas! I ne hadde ybrought hir in hir sherte!
for sorwe of which I wol not live to morwe,
But if ye lordes rewe upon my sorwe.

for, by that cause I say no tyme er now
Hir to deliver, I holden have my pees;
But now or never, if that it lyke yow,
I may hir have right sone, doutelees.
O help and grace! amonges al this prees,
Rewe on this olde caitif in destresse,
Sin I through yow have al this hevinesse!

Ye have now caught and fettered in prisoun
Troians ynowe; and if your willes be,
My child with oon may have redempcioun.
Now for the love of God and of bountee,
Oon of so fele, alas! so yewe him me.
What nede were it this preyere for to werne,
Sin ye shul bothe han folk and toun as yerne?

On peril of my lyf, I shal not lye,
Appollo hath me told it feithfully;
I have eek founde it by astronomye,
By sort, and by augurie eek trewely,
And dar wel seye, the tyme is faste by,
That fyr and flaumbe on al the toun shal sprede;
And thus shal Troye turne in ashen dede.

for certeyn, Phebus and Neptunus bothe,
That makeden the wallis of the toun,
Ben with the folk of Troye alwey so wrothe,
That thei wol bringe it to confusioun,
Right in despyt of king Lameadoun.

Because he nolde payen hem hir hyre,
The toun of Troye shal ben set on fyre.

Telling his tale alwey, this olde greye,
Humble in speche, and in his lokinge eke,
The salte teres from his eyen tweye
ful faste ronnen down by eyther cheke.
So longe he gan of socour hem byseke
That, for to hele him of his sorwes sore,
They yave him Antenor, withoute more.

But who was glad ynough but Calkas tho?
And of this thing ful sone his nedes leyde
On hem that sholden for the tretis go,
And hem for Antenor ful ofte preyde
To bringen hoom king Toas and Criseyde;
And whan Pryam his savegarde sente,
Thembassadours to Troye streyght they wente.

The cause ytold of hir cominge, the olde
Pryam the king ful sone in general
Let hereupon his parlement to holde,
Of which the effect rehersen yow I shal.
Thembassadours ben answered for fynal,
Theschaunge of prisoners and al this nede
Hem lyketh wel, and forth in they procede.

This Troilus was present in the place,
Whan axed was for Antenor Criseyde,
for which ful sone chaungen gan his face,
As he that with tho wordes wel neigh deyde.
But nathelees, he no word to it seyde,
Lest men sholde his affeccioun espye;
With mannes herte he gan his sorwes drye.

And ful of anguish and of grisly drede
Hood what lordes wolde unto it seye;
And if they wolde graunte, as God forbede,
Theschaunge of hir, than thoughte he thinges
tweye,
first, how to save hir honour, and what weye
he mighte best theschaunge of hir withstonde;
ful faste he caste how al this mighte stonde.

Love him made al prest to doon hir byde,
And rather dye than she sholde go;
But resoun seyde him, on that other syde:
Withoute assent of hir ne do not so,
Lest for thy werk she wolde be thy fo,
And seyn, that thorough thy medling is yblowen
Your bother love, there it was erst unknowen.

for which he gan deliberen, for the beste,
That though the lordes wolde that she wente,
He wolde late hem graunte what hem leste,
And telle his lady first what that they mente.
And whan that she had seyde him hir entente,
Therafter wolde he werken also blyve,
Though al the world ayein it wolde stryve.

Ector, which that wel the Grekes herde,
for Antenor how they wolde han Criseyde,
Gan it withstonde, and sobrelly answered:

gires, she nis no prisoner, he seyde;
I noot on yow who that this charge leyde,
But, on my part, ye may eftsone him telle,
We usen here no wommen for to selle.

The noyse of peple upstirte thanne at ones,
As breme as blase of straw yset on fyre;
for infortune it wolde, for the nones,
They sholden hir confusioun desyre.
Ector, quod they, what goost may yow
enspyre,
This womman thus to shilde and doon us lese
Daun Antenor? a wrong wey now ye chese,

That is so wys, and eek so bold baroun,
And we han nede of folk, as men may see;
He is eek oon, the grettest of this toun;
O Ector, lat tho fantasies be!
O king Pryam, quod they, thus seggen we,
That al our voys is to forgon Criseyde;
And to deliveren Antenor they preyde.

O Juvenal, lord! trewe is thy sentence,
That litel witen folk what is to yerne
That they ne finde in hir desyr offence;
for cloud of error lat hem not descerne
What best is; and lo, here ensample as yerne.
This folk desiren now deliveraunce
Of Antenor, that broughte hem to mischaunce!

for he was after traytour to the toun
Of Troye; alas! they quitte him out to rathe;
O nyce world, lo, thy discrecioun!
Criseyde, which that never dide hem skathe,
Shal now no lenger in hir blisse bathe;
But Antenor, he shal com hoom to toun,
And she shal out; thus seyden here and howne.

for which delibered was by parlement,
for Antenor to yelden up Criseyde,
And it pronounced by the president,
Hitheigh that Ector Nay ful ofte preyde.
And fynaly, what wight that it withseyde,
It was for nought, it moste been, and sholde;
for substaunce of the parlement it wolde.

Departed out of parlement echone,
This Troilus, withoute wordes mo,
Unto his chaumbre spedde him faste alone,
But if it were a man of his or two,
The whiche he bad out faste for to go,
Because he wolde slepen, as he seyde,
And hastely upon his bed him leyde.

And as in winter leves been biraft,
Eche after other, til the tree be bare,
So that ther nis but bark and braunche ylaft,
Lyth Troilus, biraft of ech welfare,
Ybounden in the blake bark of care,
Disposed wood out of his wit to breyde,
So sore him sat the chaunginge of Criseyde.

He rist him up, and every dore he shette

And window eek, and tho this sorweful man
Upon his beddes syde adoun him sette,
ful lyk a deed image pale and wan;
And in his brest the heped wo bigan
Outbreste, and he to werken in this wyse
In his woodnesse, as I shal yow devyse.

Right as the wilde bole biginneth springe
Now here, now there, ydarted to the herte,
And of his deeth roreth in compleyninge,
Right so gan he aboute the chaumbre sterte,
Smyting his brest ay with his festes smerte;
His heed to the wal, his body to the grounde
ful ofte he swapte, himselven to confounde.

His eyen two, for pitee of his herte,
Out stremeden as swifte welles tweye;
The heighe sobbes of his sorwes smerte
His speche him rafte, unnethes mighte he seye:
O deeth, alas! why wiltow do me deye?
Acursed be the day which that nature
Shoop me to ben a lyves creature!

But after, whan the furie and the rage
Which that his herte twiste and faste threste,
By lengthe of tyme somewhat gan asswage,
Upon his bed he leyde him down to reste;
But tho bigonne his teres more outbreste,
That wonder is, the body may suffyse
To half this wo, which that I yow devyse.

Than seyde he thus: fortune! alas the whyle!
What have I doon, what have I thus agilt?
How mightestow for reuthe me bigyle?
Is ther no grace, and shal I thus be spilt?
Shal thus Criseyde away, for that thou wilt?
Alas! how maystow in thyn herte finde
To been to me thus cruel and unkinde?

Have I thee nought honoured al my lyve,
As thou wel wost, above the goddes alle?
Why wiltow me fro joye thus deprive?
O Troilus, what may men now thee calle
But wrecche of wrecches, out of honour falle
Into miserie, in which I wol biwayle
Criseyde, alas! til that the breeth me fayle?

Alas, fortune! if that my lyf in joye
Displeased hadde unto thy foule envye,
Why ne haddestow my fader, king of Troye,
Byrafft the lyf, or doon my bretheren dye,
Or slayn myself, that thus compleyne and crye,
I, combre/world, that may of nothing serve,
But ever dye, and never fully sterve?

If that Criseyde allone were me laft,
Nought roughte I whider thou woldest me
stere;
And hir, alas! than hastow me biraft.
But evermore, lo! this is thy manere,
To reve a wight that most is to him dere,
To preve in that thy gerful violence,
Thus am I lost, ther helpeth no defence!